



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE COMPLETE NURSE \*

By ANNIE W. GOODRICH, R.N.

Inspector of Nurse Training Schools, New York State Education Department,  
Albany, N. Y.

THE perplexing problems that are confronting us to-day in schools of nursing have led me to select as my text, Rabelais's definition of education, "The aim of education is the forming of a complete man skilled in art and industry" and as my title, "The Complete Nurse." The subject is an ambitious one and lends itself to amplification. One could easily write a thesis on the personal qualifications alone and many pages might be devoted to the general and technical education with a *lively* discussion as to the classification of nursing, whether as a profession or vocation or whether it should be relegated as a class requiring a still less educational preparation. To quote from a recent inquirer as to the educational qualifications necessary for admission to a nurse training school, "I am eighteen, my parents cannot afford to give me a business education and I have always thought I would like this trade." Since the privilege of a text precludes discussion, I shall dare to assert that nursing should be placed among the recognized professions, begging to submit as the basis of my conclusion, a generally accepted definition of the word profession, "the word (profession) implies attainments in special knowledge as distinguished from mere skill; a practical dealing with forces as distinguished from studies and investigation; and an application of such knowledge to use for others as a vocation as distinguished from its pursuit for one's own purpose." And I shall beg to fortify my definition by quotations from two eminent authorities, one in education and the other in medicine. The Commissioner of Education in Washington in his letter of transmittal to the Secretary of the Interior of a recently published monograph by Miss Nutting of the Department of Nursing and Health, Columbia University, on the educational status of nursing, writes as follows:

"Sir: Within comparatively recent years the trained nurse has become an important and constant helper of the physician, not only in public and private hospitals, but also in the home, taking the place of the untrained watchers who, however willing, can render only an ineffective service. This work of nursing has rapidly advanced to the position of a profession, requiring careful preparation for admission." Later in

---

\* Address given at the Metropolitan Training School for Nurses, Blackwell's Island, New York, May 23, 1912.

this same monograph we find the following quotation from Dr. Lewellys Barker of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, concerning the recent progress in nursing, "Nursing is the one profession in which all, men as well as women, will admit that women excel." And he continues, "If we expect to draw the best women into trained nursing, we must do what we can to make the rewards what they should be. The pecuniary return is not the only one to be considered. The kind of education given, the social regard insured, the interests aroused, the careers opened up, are really more motivating than any monetary consideration." And our conclusion concerning the educational status of the nurse has indeed not two but many supporters, both among educators and in the medical profession, notably a member of the medical board of this institution who addressed you last year. But if nursing has definitely found its place among the professions it is as Dr. Webster said, "still in its infancy," and like a precocious child, its rapid growth has not allowed for proper development in educational directions. To attempt to discuss so broad a subject as the education of the nurse to-night would be futile, but I am venturing to present in briefest outlines certain other conclusions for your consideration, for the education of so potent a factor for far-reaching good in the community as the nurse has come to be is a matter for careful thought, even I think for study not only by those responsible for her preparation or by the members of the profession, but by every member of the community. Wherever the sick are to-day, whether rich or poor, in the institution or in the private dwelling, the nurse is there performing manifold duties, caring for varied conditions, carrying always no slight burden of responsibility, and in the rapid expansion of public health work we find her in this new field; in school nursing, fighting tuberculosis and infant mortality, inspecting tenements, in short, a health nurse whose duties are as distinctly those of a teacher as of a nurse. A public servant for whose preparation the state can and should assume some definite responsibility, determining for the members of this profession, not less than for others, their place in a great educational system whose high purpose is the shaping of human energies that they may most efficiently serve the state. The history of nursing does not differ materially, except possibly in its phenomenally rapid increase in schools and pupils, from the history of other professions. Growth means expansion and expansion means readjustment; and like other professions and vocations we too have outgrown our system. In almost every city we have our institutions of learning and our institutions for the sick; the nurse has found her place in one but I am convinced that neither the nurse nor the institutions of learning will have rendered their full service to the community until she has found

her place there too. Is engineering or the art of cultivating the soil of so much higher value to the community than the art of cultivating health in human beings, that there should be schools of engineering and schools of agriculture in the universities but no schools of nursing? I think not. We need a place in the colleges for our preliminary preparation for which we must now depend upon the over-burdened institutions for the sick and which in many cases they are still unable to provide, although it is generally conceded that such preliminary preparation is essential. We need the advanced courses for the preparation of the teachers and administrators in our 1100 schools, only one such course having as yet been established. We need special courses for the preparation of the public health nurse and social worker of whom there are now over 3,000; that they may have not only the scientific knowledge that should underlie all constructive work, but the proper knowledge of social and economic conditions, that they may more effectively coöperate with the other social and municipal organizations already in the field. We need and sadly need such a readjustment of the hospital system that the educational and personal qualifications, even the age requirement, shall not be sacrificed to meet the need of mere numbers. Does the picture of the girl of 18, 19 or 20, whose mental training ceased with the elementary grade, as the sole guardian of ten or twenty acutely sick patients at night or in other equally responsible positions commend itself to you? It does not commend itself to the women who know the responsibility involved, responsibility that with more liberal educational advantages, many added years and a wider professional knowledge they shrank from, questioning their ability to assume. In those most important and susceptible years preceding maturity, the place of the future nurse is in the secondary schools receiving the physical, intellectual, moral and æsthetic education that should be the foundation of the professional structure. The most superficial study of the subjects taught in the secondary schools would show that the majority have a direct and all an indirect bearing on the education of the nurse. Education was never so obtainable nor was it ever so universally availed of by all classes as it is to-day and the personal qualifications essential to the nurse are found in every class. We need in our schools the women who are willing to sacrifice pleasures and luxuries of food and raiment that they may have the mental food to make them efficient in their chosen calling, and believe me, this is the type of woman that is crowding our higher schools and colleges to-day. The last report from the Bureau in Washington shows the number of pupils in the high schools of the United States to have increased from 500,000 to 900,000, nearly double, within the past three years and in New York State the number of girls in schools con-

siderably exceeds the boys. America's gift to her children is the public school system—a gift not always availed of, indeed sometimes to be enforced by law—and the state protecting the child from the parents whose parental ambition has been so destroyed by the struggle for existence that it would rob its child of the education that would enable it to attain to efficient citizenship is strongly analogous to the members of a profession struggling to protect the profession from the individual interests that would deter its members from obtaining even the minimum preparation for an efficient service to the community. In contending for a theoretical foundation we would not belittle the place of practical experience in the education of the nurse nor do we belittle the value of a service sufficiently long to allow of a constant repetition of procedures. No one who has initiated the novice in the simplest of such or has tried to inculcate a so-called aseptic conscience can fail to realize that only through constant practice can the action of the hands become so automatically correct that there will be no danger should the mind be temporarily diverted as must frequently be the case. But in order that the nurse may be *practically* prepared for the present demands we must also ask for some readjustment of the hospital system and greater coöperation on the part of all institutions. If the preparation of the nurse for the surgical case requires a definite and intensive drilling in surgical technic extending over many weeks, is it not reasonable to assert that so complicated and delicate a piece of human machinery as the child is worthy of an equally intensive and prolonged study. If it is true that 6,000 to 7,000 of every 100,000 school children die yearly from some form of tubercular disease, is a nurse's preparation complete who is not equipped to scientifically combat this disease? If one out of every 200 inhabitants must be classified among the insane, should not every nurse be required to have some knowledge of mental diseases; and with our great state hospitals filled to overflowing would there be any difficulty in obtaining such knowledge? If the child and the mother and the medically sick are to be taken care of in the home, should not these experiences be emphasized rather than the surgical experience, since the surgical case almost invariably finds its way to the institution? And could not and should not such a complete theoretical and practical experience be obtained in the three years which in days and weeks is the equivalent of a four years' college course? We need above all things strong representative laws on the statute books; we have indeed secured legislation in over thirty states, and soon probably shall in all, but in New York and I regret to say in the majority of the states our laws are conspicuously inefficient. We have been called a trust. Ours is a

trust, in the highest and most sacred sense of the word. It has been said that we are witnessing the birth of a new democracy. The life of that new democracy in its fullest sense is dependent upon the mental, moral and physical health of its children. The community is placing the child from its birth and the child of all classes in the hands of the nurse, and we need "to invoke the protection of a billion dollar government" with its schools, its universities and its hospitals to help us more fully to meet our great responsibility.

You who have to-night become my professional sisters are perhaps asking what your part is in the matter. There is not any member who has not a very definite part in any question that concerns her profession, but you have I think, a great part not only because you are bringing to us the enthusiasm and strength of youth and more recent knowledge, but because to you has been accorded a very unusual opportunity, a wonderful study of humanitarianism and human suffering. Week by week and month by month you have seen this island of the afflicted become more and more a haven of refuge for those who must endure to the end and you have also seen it serve as a great workshop materially and scientifically equipped not only for the repairing of human health but for the preparation of health teachers whose doctrine is prevention and whose optimistic motto might be, I think, "To heal the body is perchance to save the soul."

It has been your privilege to serve as an apprentice in this shop, to receive theoretical instruction above the average and an experience in diseases whose variety it would be hard to equal, and you too have been ministered to by these guardians of the city poor, for they have provided for the rest and refreshment of the body and mind, which they could not always protect from over-demand and excessive hours of duty; this beautiful home, to which through the coming years you will look back with, I am sure, affection and gratitude, realizing that here too was a definite contribution to your education. Knowledge is more than power, it is a definite responsibility,—“Because she knew” said some one writing of Florence Nightingale,—because you know what has been done, what there is to do and in a measure how to do it. We beg you to bear the full burden of your professional responsibilities. We ask you to enter the state examination for registration, it is your immediate and personal contribution to our professional strength; we ask you to join the Red Cross that your country may command your services in time of war or national disaster; we ask you to be an active and interested member of your alumnae association that through it you may be kept in touch with state and national progress and that your association may have the

benefit of your experience. But above all, we beg you to carry your professional responsibility whenever you minister to the sick, so demonstrating by your skilful, intelligent and self-effacing service to the public the value of your preparation and the wider value of your calling, that in our efforts to uplift our standards we shall have the strongest support that can be asked, and one I think that has rarely failed a just cause—the support of public opinion. You do not need my feeble words to portray “The Complete Nurse” for “Our Lady of the Lamp” is an enduring portrait. With cultural and intellectual attainments far above the average, ever the student; in the little hospital in Kaiserwerth the probationer performing conscientiously the humbler duties that make for tactile skill and technical efficiency; in the hospitals of a great metropolis the post-graduate pupil seeking further and wider professional experience; in the community the social service worker and health teacher, many years before the need of such was even recognized; and in a last supreme effort, dramatically and to herself most unexpectedly at one of the world’s tragedies, a great war over whose terrible uncalled-for death list was to be written the epitaph that seems to be inscribed on every monumental disaster, “It might have been prevented,” we find her demonstrating to a public who had heretofore turned a deaf ear to the need of her country of the efficiently trained nurse. Says an English writer, “whether there be theories, they shall pass, whether there be systems they shall fail, the true epoch maker in the history of the human soul is the man who educes from this bewildering universe a new and elevating joy.” This woman was, I think, in truth an epoch maker for her sisters’ souls. Our theories concerning nursing may fail and our systems will be ever changing but to the nurse has indeed been given an elevating joy. Clad in the garb which, like the academic gown, wipes out all social distinction, emphasizing only scholastic attainments, she can go forth to render a complete service, the service of mind and heart and hand for the physical and social betterment of mankind. This is the opportunity that awaits you whose entrance into the profession we are celebrating to-night. There is no knowledge too great to bring to it, there is no vision that can encompass its possibilities. By her lamp your lamp has been lighted, let it shine as hers did in the darkest places, let it cast such a halo around the simplest duties that the intelligent service of the hands may at last receive its proper valuation and may its rays penetrating the gloom of your discouragements and seeming failures help you to unswervingly carry to its highest completion the work you have so well begun.